

CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

1. (Currently amended) A ~~graft~~ polymer composition, which comprises at least two ~~graft~~ polymers including a first ~~graft~~ polymer and a second ~~graft~~ polymer, where each of said ~~graft~~ polymers are obtained by a process including the step of ~~graft-polymerizing~~ polymerizing a monoethylenically unsaturated monomer component onto a ~~main~~ chain including a polyether portion and where at least one of said first and second ~~graft~~ polymers have at least one end structural unit having at least one carbon atom, wherein the monoethylenically unsaturated monomer component includes an unsaturated carboxylic monomer as an essential component,

with the ~~graft~~ polymer composition being characterized in that the difference between the number of carbon atoms in the end structural unit of said first ~~graft~~ polymer and the number of carbon atoms of an end structural unit of said second ~~graft~~ polymer is not less than 3, where said structural units are located at both ends of the respective ~~main~~ chain including said polyether portion and where:

(i) said end structural unit of a respective ~~graft~~ polymer is defined as a portion extending from each end ether bond portion, and when there is a difference in number of carbon atoms between the end structural units at each end of the respective ~~graft~~ polymer, the number of carbon atoms in the end structural unit of the respective ~~graft~~ polymer is defined as the end structural units of the respective ~~graft~~ polymer having the largest number of carbon atoms; and

(ii) when a ~~main~~ chain of a polyether of a respective ~~graft~~ polymer is derived from an alkylene oxide alone, the number of carbon atoms in the respective end structural unit of the respective ~~graft~~ polymer is defined as zero.

2. (Currently amended) A ~~graft~~ polymer composition according to claim 1, wherein the number of carbon atoms in an end structural unit containing the smallest number of carbon atoms of said end structural units of each end of the respective ~~main~~ chains of the at least two ~~graft~~ polymers is not larger than 5.

3. (Currently amended) A ~~graft~~ polymer composition according to claim 1, which has an acid value of not less than 2.0 meq/g.

4. (Currently amended) A ~~graft~~ polymer composition according to claim 2, which has an acid value of not less than 2.0 meq/g.

5. (Currently amended) A ~~graft~~ polymer composition according to claim 1, wherein a ~~graft~~ polymer having an end structural unit containing the largest number of carbon atoms of the end structural units of both ends of the respective ~~main~~ chains including the polyether portion of the at least two ~~graft~~ polymers accounts for not less than 30 weight % of the entirety of the ~~graft~~ polymers.

6. (Currently amended) A ~~graft~~ polymer composition according to claim 2, wherein a ~~graft~~ polymer having an end structural unit containing the largest number of carbon atoms of the end structural units of both ends of the respective ~~main~~ chains including the polyether portion of the at least two ~~graft~~ polymers accounts for not less than 30 weight % of the entirety of the ~~graft~~ polymers.

7. (Currently amended) A ~~graft~~ polymer composition according to claim 3, wherein a ~~graft~~ polymer having an end structural unit containing the largest number of carbon atoms of the end structural units of both ends of the respective ~~main~~ chains including the polyether portion of the at least two ~~graft~~ polymers accounts for not less than 30 weight % of the entirety of the ~~graft~~ polymers.

8. (Currently amended) A ~~graft~~ polymer composition according to claim 4, wherein a ~~graft~~ polymer having an end structural unit containing the largest number of carbon atoms of the end structural units of both ends of the respective ~~main~~ chains including the polyether portion of the at least two ~~graft~~ polymers accounts for not less than 30 weight % of the entirety of the ~~graft~~ polymers.

9. (Currently amended) A production process for a ~~graft~~ polymer composition, which comprises the step of adding a monoethylenically unsaturated monomer component to a mixture of at least two polyether compounds in order to ~~graft-polymerize~~ polymerize the monoethylenically unsaturated monomer component at the same time onto the at least two polyether compounds, wherein the monoethylenically unsaturated monomer component includes an unsaturated carboxylic monomer as an essential component;

wherein the difference between the number of carbon atoms in an end structural unit of a first of said polyether compounds and the number of carbon atoms in an end structural unit of a second of said polyether compounds is not less than 3 where:

(i) said end structural unit of a respective polyether compound is defined as a portion extending from each end ether bond portion, and when there is a difference in number of carbon atoms between the end structural units of each respective polyether compound,

whichever is larger is defined as the number of carbon atoms in the respective end structural unit; and

(ii) when an end structural unit is derived from an alkylene oxide alone, the number of carbon atoms in the respective end structural unit is defined as zero.

10. (Currently amended) A production process according to claim 9, wherein the number of carbon atoms in an end structural unit containing the smallest number of carbon atoms of said end structural units of each end of the respective [[main]] chains of the at least two polyether compounds is not larger than 5.

11. (Currently amended) A production process according to claim 10, wherein the resultant ~~graft~~ polymer composition has an acid value of not less than 2.0 meq/g.

12. (Currently amended) A production process according to claim 10, wherein a polyether compound having an end structural unit containing the largest number of carbon atoms of the end structural units of both ends of the respective [[main]] chains of the at least two polyether compounds accounts for not less than 30 weight % of the entirety of the polyether compounds.

13. (Currently amended) A production process for a ~~graft~~ polymer composition, which comprises the step of blending ~~graft~~ polymers (A) and (A') together, wherein:

the ~~graft~~ polymer (A) is obtained by ~~graft-polymerizing~~ polymerizing a monoethylenically unsaturated monomer component onto a polyether compound (a) having

an end structural unit, wherein the monoethylenically unsaturated monomer component includes an unsaturated carboxylic monomer as an essential component; and

the ~~graft~~ polymer (A') is obtained by ~~graft-polymerizing~~ polymerizing a monoethylenically unsaturated monomer component onto a polyether compound (a') having an end structural unit, wherein the monoethylenically unsaturated monomer component includes an unsaturated carboxylic monomer as an essential component;

wherein the difference between the number of carbon atoms in said end structural unit of said polyether compound (a) and the number of carbon atoms in each end structural unit of said polyether compound (a') is not less than 3, where:

(i) said end structural unit of a respective polyether compound is defined as a portion extending from each end ether bond portion, and when there is a difference in number of carbon atoms between the end structural units of each respective polyether compound, whichever is larger is defined as the number of carbon atoms in the respective end structural unit; and

(ii) when an end structural unit is derived from an alkylene oxide alone, the number of carbon atoms in the respective end structural unit is defined as zero.

14. (Currently amended) A production process according to claim 13, wherein the number of carbon atoms in an end structural unit containing the smallest number of carbon atoms of said end structural units of each end of the respective ~~[[main]]~~ chains of the polyether compounds (a) and (a') is not larger than 5.

15. (Currently amended) A production process according to claim 14, wherein the resultant ~~graft~~ polymer composition has an acid value of not less than 2.0 meq/g.

16. (Currently amended) A production process according to claim 14, wherein a polyether compound having an end structural unit containing the largest number of carbon atoms of said end structural units of both ends of the respective [[main]] chains of the polyether compounds (a) and (a') accounts for not less than 30 weight % of the entirety of the polyether compounds.

17. (Currently amended) A liquid-detergent builder, which comprises the ~~graft~~ polymer composition as recited in claim 1 as an essential component.

18. (Currently amended) A liquid-detergent builder, which comprises the ~~graft~~ polymer composition as recited in claim 2 as an essential component.

19. (Currently amended) A liquid detergent composition, which comprises the ~~graft~~ polymer composition as recited in claim 1 as an essential component.

20. (Currently amended) A liquid detergent composition, which comprises the ~~graft~~ polymer composition as recited in claim 2 as an essential component.

21. (Currently amended) The ~~graft~~ polymer composition according to claim 1, wherein the number of carbon atoms of said end structural units is defined as zero when said polyether includes only hydroxy terminal end structural units.

22. (Previously presented) The process of claim 9, wherein the number of carbon atoms of said end structural units is defined as zero when said polyester includes only hydroxy terminal end structural units.

23. (Previously presented) The process of claim 13, wherein the number of carbon atoms of said end structural units is defined as zero when said polyether includes only hydroxy terminal end structural units.